

THE AUTHORS SHOW – Authors of Nonfiction

Author: Bernard J. Fleury

My writing journey is intimately tied in with my life's journey.

According to my dear mother I was born prematurely after she slipped going down a small slope to feed their pet rabbit. I was seven-pounds; hardly a preemie. But she was engaged to my handsome dad for a year. I finally figured out why my mother loved to play *On Blueberry Hill* on her piano. It was a hit song and Blueberry Hill was a favorite parking spot for lovers beginning in the early 1930's.

When I was five years old we moved into a new home dad built in 1937.

I graduated from grade eight in June 1945, the year WWII ended. That fall I entered St. Michael's High School. It was during those four years that my writing career began. My love for nature showed in my poetry like *Wee Golden Bantie* Rooster when I found my pet dead on the roosting board. My poem *Prelude to Winter* was published with Special Mention in a national anthology of Parochial School Poetry called *Young America Sings* in April 1949.

At about the age of ten I began to think about being a priest. I also thought about becoming a veterinarian. But the expense of the schooling required was prohibitive.

The desire for priesthood surfaced again. With the help of one of our parish priests I applied for admission and was accepted to St. Charles College in Catonsville, Maryland.

I graduated from St. Charles in 1954 and prepared for major seminary in Baltimore. My writing career was confined to school assignments and journals of my everyday life and concerns. I wanted to be a teaching priest in a Catholic college or seminary. For that to happen I had to have Bachelor's and Master's degrees at least. In August 1951, the Bishop called me into the chancery. I told him of my desire to be a teaching priest and I must go back to Baltimore where I could earn the degrees I needed. I was not fluent enough in Latin or French to take subjects like algebra and sciences in those languages. He insisted that I try Montreal. After much anguished pondering I decided that I had to go to the university in Amherst (UMASS) and get my Bachelor's degree in teaching history at the secondary level.

My writing career resumed when I became editor of the UMASS poetry magazine for 1951-53. I resumed my social life with former friends, including a beautiful young woman who I had known since our days in Grange Youth Group, when we were 14 years old. I finally asked her for a date. When I found out later she had a boyfriend in the Navy and I was the fill in, I stopped dating her. But I had fallen in love with her.

I was unsettled regarding my call to the priesthood. So in the fall of 1953, I entered Holy Cross Seminary at Stonehill College. I was to take all of my required philosophy in one year. At the end of March 1954, my spiritual director told me to go home, get married, and teach school. That's what I did.

No teaching jobs were available at that time of year so I worked as a stock boy in a department store. One day in early April I thought of calling Lida, the girl with the boyfriend in the Navy. I asked her to go on a date. She said yes. After the dance, we were parked in her driveway. "I have to tell you something," she said. "I found out my Navy boyfriend had been home on leave while you were in the seminary and dating someone else."

All my feelings for her rushed over me. I took her hands in mine, hugging and kissing her. I was crazy in love with her. One month later I asked her to marry me. We married on August twenty-seventh, 1955. Our love is even stronger as we approach our Sixty-Second Anniversary.

On April 1954, I became teaching principal at East Whately Grammar School. I also coached basketball and baseball. I was twenty-one years old. I received my Master's degree in Education Administration and Philosophy in June 1956. My dissertation was my main writing task during those years. In the fall of 1956, the seventh and eighth grades were to be at the new frontier regional school. I chose to move to Hopkins Academy, where I taught Latin and English.

I had to increase my salary substantially to make it a living wage, teaching in Springfield (1952-58) and Chicopee (1958-62) for a \$1,000 raise each time accomplished that.

In 1956 we bought a lot in Easthampton, built a new home and moved in December 1957. In the fall of 1962, I accepted a position as Teaching Principal at Sunderland Grammar School.

In 1963, I went back to UMASS to earn my Doctorate in School Administration. My writing from 1963-66 was all part of my assignments for graduate classes. I served my residency requirement (1966-68) and wrote my dissertation, chosen as one of the best nationally in my field in 1968. It was placed in a hundred-year time capsule in the Air Force Academy of Colorado.

During 1967-69, I identified five philosophers whose answers to the question what is man were the foundations of US education and most of the western Judeo-Christian world. The first edition of *What is Man* was a book of readings and interpretations in 1975. The revisions in 1985 and 2011 expanded the title to *What is Man? Male and Female* and the scope and intended audience. The final edition in 2016 brought the book into the light series by addressing the question: What role does the Inner and Outer Light play in each philosopher's view? This was the seventh of my thirteen book series. The first six eBooks/Audio Books/Print Books in the *Called Into Life By The Light* series invite the reader to explore with me that something and Someone called The Light. Light is the foundation of all that exists. You can't go back in time far enough to escape it. The reader will see how something called light is the ultimate energy of the universe and the Someone, Who is The Kindly Light, created and leads us on our Faith Journey. For specific information on each of the thirteen books, go to www.intolifebylight.com/books.

My hope and expectations as an author are to have at least one of my thirteen books ranked as a best seller in its niche, even for a short time in 2018.